

SPOTLIGHT

Linda Lingle

BY BETH PANITZ

This Hawaii governor leads with Jewish values

For Linda Lingle, governor of sunny Hawaii, the heat is always on. She races from a meeting with her closest advisers, to a press conference, and then back to her office to sign a bill into law. In this frantic schedule, there's one weekly meeting that the governor especially cherishes—every Wednesday morning she meets with her rabbi. Together, they study Torah, giving the governor a moment to reflect on the lessons learned from Biblical leaders such as Avraham, Moshe, and Miriam that she can apply to her work as governor.

The study sessions are one way that Governor Lingle observes Judaism while leading America's 50th state. When she moved into the governor's residence in January 2003, she proudly attached a mezuzah to the doorpost at the entrance, and each Pesach, she hosts a community Seder.

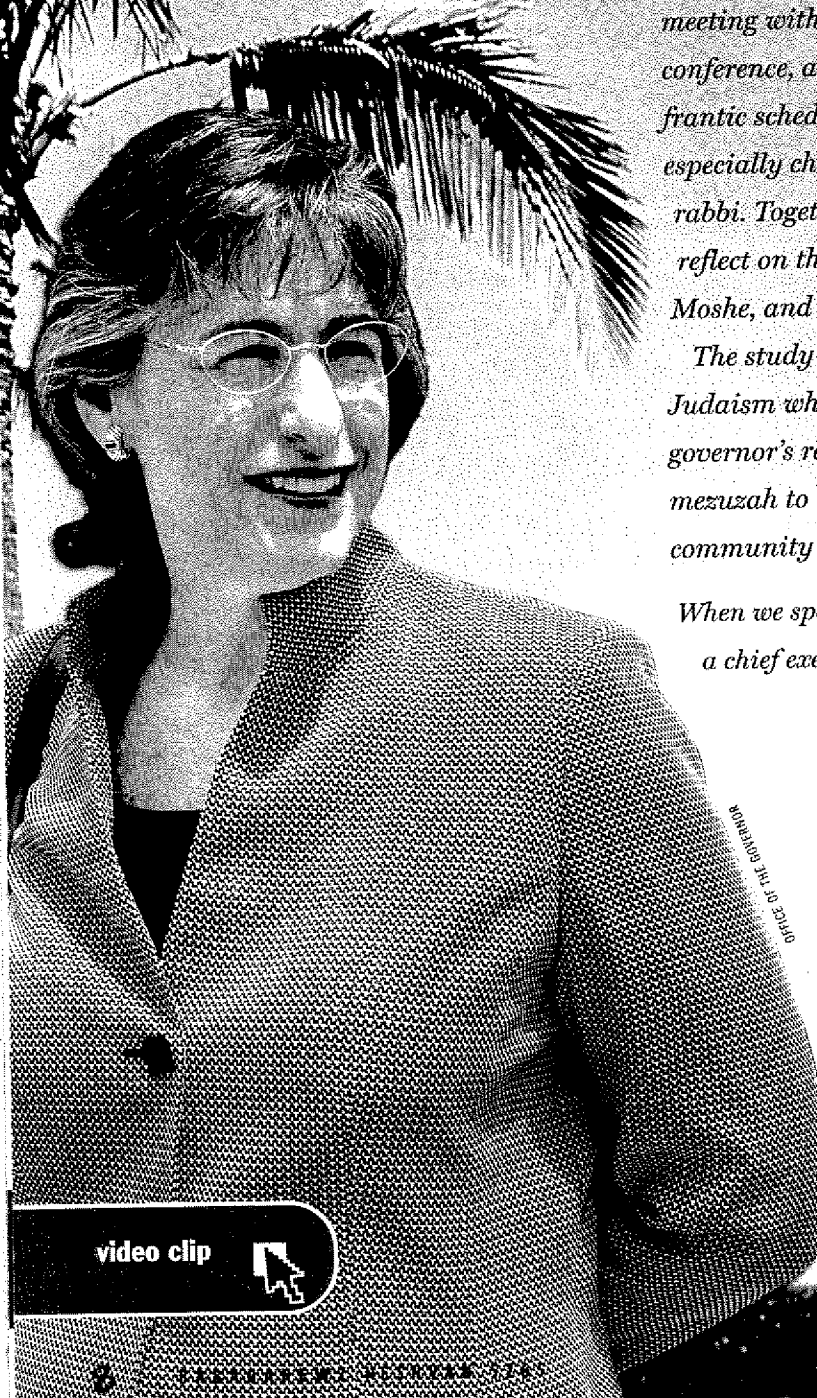
When we spoke with Gov. Lingle, she re“LET”ed what it is like to serve as a chief executive in a flowery, tropical paradise.

BABA: Aloha, Gov. Lingle. Why did you run for governor of Hawaii?

GOV. LINGLE: I thought it was a good way to help people. When the community has a problem, being a leader puts me in a position to help solve it. When I came into office, our state had a serious economic crisis, and there had been lots of public corruption. I wanted to restore the people's trust in the government. We've gone a long way toward doing that.

BABA: What traits make a good leader?

GOV. LINGLE: Realizing that you can't please everyone is among the most important traits for a leader. You have to make what you believe is the best decision for the greatest number of



video clip



Head of State

JEWISHFUL THINKING

people, and then move forward without getting overly concerned that some people won't like your decision.

BABA: Can you give us an example?



Governor Lingle meets with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (above); and with soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (below).

GOV. LINGLE: Sure. I can't spend all of the money that the legislature requests in the budget, because they want more money than we have. I'm the one who must tell people they can't have something, and people don't like to hear that. But it's my responsibility to maintain financial health for the state.

BABA: How have Jewish values influenced your views of leadership?

GOV. LINGLE: Jewish values provide a strong foundation for my life and my job. I appreciate that Judaism requires that the community and the individual

take responsibility for helping the poor. In fact, this responsibility has influenced my administration's plans to work with the private and non-profit sectors to build affordable rental housing for Hawaii's 5,000 homeless citizens. We've come dangerously close to accepting the homeless as a problem we just can't solve. We must face this, even though it will be one of the toughest issues for our community.

BABA: Why do you make time in your hectic schedule to study each week with a rabbi?

GOV. LINGLE: Torah study with the rabbi reminds me that although we live in a highly technological,

modern world, ancient Jewish values, such as the obligation to be compassionate to others, can still guide human behavior.

BABA: You recently traveled to Israel for the first time with an official delegation from Hawaii. As a Jew, what was the most meaningful part of the trip?

GOV. LINGLE: It was a trip of a lifetime. One of the most meaningful parts was our visit to Masada. After Rome destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E., a group of Jews fled Jerusalem to the fortress of Masada, which is situated on top of an enormous, isolated rock. There, they courageously held out for three years. I wasn't familiar with that history of our people and the difficult decisions they were forced to make.

BABA: *Mahalo* (thank you), Gov. Lingle. May you continue to go from strength to strength. ☺



"Linda Lingle: Head of State"

PAGES 8-9

Linda Lingle, Hawaii's governor, tells BABAGANEWZ how Jewish values help make her a better leader. In this lesson, students will discuss important Jewish values that leaders should possess and will look for examples of these values in the lives of the presidential candidates and Biblical figures. Students will then deliver campaign speeches to the class demonstrating how these important leadership qualities make the presidential candidates and Biblical figures strong leaders.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore the ways in which Jewish values help make good leaders.
- Students will find examples of how the presidential candidates and Biblical figures demonstrate positive leadership qualities.

VOCABULARY

מושל המדינה	governor
נשיא	president
מערכת	campaign
נאום	speech

FIND MORE ONLINE

On www.babaganewz.com/teachers, you'll find great teaching resources, including links to the official Governor Linda Lingle, John Kerry, and George W. Bush websites and printable versions of the worksheets and Jewish Texts.

QUOTES & QUESTIONS

"[Governor Lingle learned] about a special architectural quality of the Temple that described her leadership style. While most buildings are constructed to bring light inside, she explained, King Solomon built the Holy Temple to project light outward... enabling the Temple's spiritual light to illuminate the world. So too, she said, a good leader must shine outward to the people..."

How can a leader shine outward? How does this fit with the concept of being a "light unto the nations"? How do you fulfill this role in your life?

Should all leaders strive to act as good role models? If so, in what ways? How can we apply Jewish ideas about leadership to non-Jewish leaders?

"In this frantic schedule, there's one weekly meeting that the governor especially cherishes—every Wednesday morning she meets with her rabbi. Together, they study Torah, giving the governor a moment to reflect on the lessons learned from Biblical leaders such as Avraham, Moshe, and Miriam that she can apply to her work as governor."

What lessons do you think she can learn from these great Jewish leaders? What special quality does each one offer? [For example, Avraham teaches the value of *hesed* (kindness); Moshe shows the importance of humility; and Miriam demonstrates the importance of thanking God.]

How do these qualities make them better leaders? Can you think of any modern leaders who share these qualities?

"Torah study with the rabbi reminds me that although we live in a highly technological,

modern world, ancient Jewish values, such as the obligation to be compassionate to others, can still guide human behavior."

What other ancient Jewish values do you think should guide human behavior? What does this have to do with living in a "highly technological, modern world"?

Are these Jewish values something that you look for in all leaders? What about political leaders such as the president of the United States?

ACTIVITY: ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

1. Read "Linda Lingle: Head of State" on pages 8-9 of BABAGANEWZ with your students and discuss the Quotes & Questions above.

2. Ask your students:

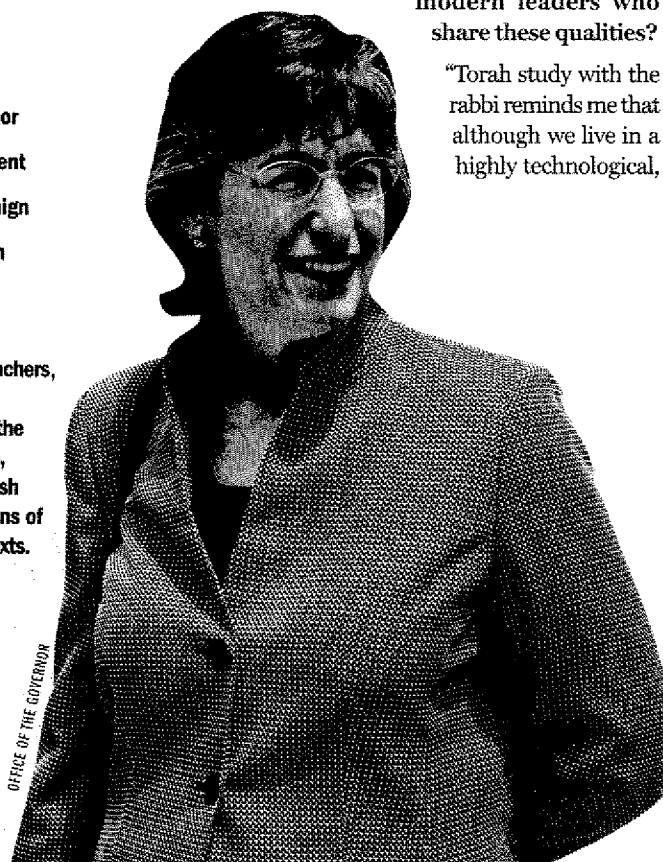
What Jewish values do you think good leaders need to possess?

List their responses on the board; then carefully examine each one. If students do not mention any of the following, add them to the list.

TEACHING TIP

Print out the following list and their Hebrew and English sources from www.babaganewz.com/teachers.

- *Ahryut*, Social Responsibility: "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" (*Vayikra* 19:16).
- *Anavah*, Humility: "[God] cannot endure the haughty and proud person" (*Psalms* 101:5).
- *Bakesh Shalom*, Peace-seeking: "Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (*Psalms* 34:15).
- *Din*, Fair Judgment: "You shall not commit a perversion of justice; you shall not favor the poor and you shall not honor the great; with righteousness shall you judge your fellow" (*Vayikra* 19:15).
- *Emet*, Truthfulness: "You shall not steal, you shall not deny falsely, and you shall not lie one man to his fellow" (*Vayikra* 19:11).
- *Emunah*, Faith: "The righteous person shall live by his or her faith" (*Habakkuk* 2:4).
- *Hokhmah*, Wisdom: "Wisdom is better than jewels" (*Proverbs* 8:11).
- *Kavod*, Honor: "Let the honor of your fellow person be as dear to you as your own" (*Pirkei Avot* 2:15).
- *Kibush Hayetzer*, Self-control: "Who is truly strong? The one who subdues his inclinations" (*Pirkei Avot* 4:1).
- *Ometz Lev*, Courage: "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear and do not lose resolve..." (*Joshua* 1:9).
- *Rahamim*, Compassion: "Perform kindness and mercy towards one another" (*Zechariah* 7:9).
- *Savlanut*, Patience: "Patience results in much understanding; impatience gets folly as its portion" (*Proverbs* 14:29).
- *Tzedek*, Justice: "Justice, justice shall you pursue..." (*Devarim* 16:20).
- *Tzniut*, Modesty: "Walk modestly with your God" (*Micah* 6:8).



This article is available in
Hebrew at www.babaganewz.com

JEWISH TEXTS

ISAIAH 42:6-7

I am God. I have called you with righteousness. I will strengthen your hand; and I will protect you. And I will set you for a covenant to the people, for a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to remove a prisoner from confinement, dwellers in darkness from a dungeon.

Who is God calling upon to serve as leaders?

According to these verses, how would Isaiah describe the role of Jewish leadership?

SHABBAT 122A

One person's candle is light for many.

How does this verse describe leadership? How can a leader light the way for others?

How might Linda Lingle understand this image of light?

What is one way you can be a light for many?

Hebrew and English versions of the Jewish values in this activity may be found at www.babaganewz.com/teachers.

3. Go through the list on the board and ask:

What is an example of this value?

Describe a time when you demonstrated this value.

Give an example of a time when a leader demonstrated this value.

Have the class vote on which three are the most important qualities for a good leader to demonstrate.

4. Study the Jewish Texts below.

5. Divide the class into groups to design campaign speeches that emphasize how these important qualities make strong leaders. Assign each group one of the following candidates:

A. Presidential nominees

In pairs or trios, have students read biographies of John Kerry and George W. Bush (available on www.babaganewz.com/teachers) and highlight instances in the candidates' lives when they demonstrated the values on your class list.

B. Biblical figures

Choose Biblical leaders whom you have studied together in class. Have students find examples when the Biblical leaders exhibited these important leadership traits.

C. An imaginary, ideal candidate

Have students invent an ideal candidate and give imaginary examples to show how he or she could display these values.



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

